



Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Meeting Minutes

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Kevin Power, Representatives Jean-Claude Ambroise, Joe Baril, Nancy E. Barnhart, Alicia Bauer, Nancy E. Beckwith, Christopher J. Burns, Michael Collins, Nancy M. Congdon, Warren T. Cooper, Syma Ebbin, Peter Fairbank, Nancy E. Gilly, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Keith L. Hedrick, Damon Q. Helme, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Michael Dean Johnson, Rosanne E. Kotowski, Elizabeth Luck, Jackie Massett, Carole McCarthy, Karen F. Morton, Scott Newsome, Dana C. Parfitt, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Kristen L. Powers, Don Pratt, Betty A. Prochaska, Sandry Ramos-Morales, John F. Scott IV, Jack Sebastian, Dana S. Semeraro, Jennifer Smuts, Joan Steinfeld, Irma Streeter, Mark Svencer, Archie C. Swindell, and Robert A. Warn

Wednesday, August 18, 2010

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex-Comm Rm 1

Regular Meeting

A. ROLL CALL

Moderator Kevin Power called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

29 members were present, and a quorum was declared.

The Moderator reported that Reps. Bauer, Congdon, Ebbin, Helme, Hubbard, Pratt and Sebastian called to say they are unable to attend this meeting. Rep. Prochaska will be late.

Members Present: Moderator Power, Rep. Ambroise, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Beckwith, Rep. Burns, Rep. Collins, Rep. Cooper, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Johnson, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Morton, Rep. Parfitt, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Powers, Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Scott, Rep. Semeraro, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer, Rep. Swindell and Rep. Warn

Members Absent: Rep. Bauer, Rep. Congdon, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Helme, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Luck, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Pratt, Rep. Ramos-Morales and Rep. Sebastian

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, School Superintendent Paul Kadri, Public Works Director Gary Schneider, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The members observed a moment of silence followed by the Salute to the Flag led by Town Manager Mark Oefinger.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 21, 2010

A motion that the minutes be adopted was made by Rep. Scott, seconded by Rep. Svencer.

The vote to accept the minutes carried 25 in favor, 2 abstentions (Abstaining: Reps. Ambroise and Beckwith).

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

None.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator Power announced that Rep. Bartnik from District 7 resigned effective August 4, 2010 because he has moved out of town.

Reps. Prochaska and Smuts arrived at this time.

F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:

1. Financial report

Mr. Oefinger reported that the Fund Balance as of June 30, 2010 is approximately \$8.5 million;

the General Contingency balance is \$350,000 with no transfers to date; the Capital Reserve balance is \$2,889,311. He stated that increases to the Capital Reserve balance are attributable to revenues from interest income, school building grants and recording fees.

2. Monthly briefing

The Town Manager highlighted numerous items in the Town Manager's News.

In response to Rep. Warn, the Town Manager clarified the letter sent to Commercial Refuse Account Customers concerning sales tax. He explained that the Town is in the process of an audit with the State Department of Revenue Services (DRS) and that the Town intends to file an administrative appeal in regard to the decision on sales tax by DRS.

G. LIAISON REPORTS

None.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. FINANCE

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town

No meeting, no report.

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Pratt

No meeting, no report.

3. EDUCATION

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Swindell

2010-0105 Change in Previously Authorized Board of Education CIP Project

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

WHEREAS, Superintendent of Schools Paul Kadri requested that the Town Council consider a change in a previously authorized Capital Improvement Program project for enhancing educational technologies related to video furnaces, and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kadri feels that a contracted, Web-based software and hosting solution would better meet the current and future needs of the school district, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the FYE 2009 CIP #5F-1 Educational Technologies-Video Furnace for \$73,000 be closed and those funds be transferred to the General Fund, and be it further

RESOLVED, that \$73,000 is appropriated from the General Fund's unreserved, undesignated fund balance to the Board of Education account #10800 - Education Services.

Refer to RTM.

A motion was made by Moderator Power, seconded by Rep. Hedrick, that this matter be Adopted for August 18, 2010.

(The above motion was made at the July 21, 2010 meeting. The vote on this item was postponed until this meeting.)

A motion to take this item from the table was made by Moderator Power, seconded by Rep. Swindell and so voted unanimously.

School Superintendent Paul Kadri explained why the Board of Education is requesting the change in authorization of CIP funds for educational technologies. He addressed the concerns raised by

several members for the yearly video host subscription cost versus the maintenance costs for video furnace equipment. He clarified the differences between the two systems.

Rep. Warn opposes using the existing CIP funds and will not support the change in authorization. He feels that custom applications of software could be costly and risky since technology changes so frequently. He would prefer to see the change in use of technology funds proceed via the usual budget process and would like the unused CIP funds returned to the General Fund.

In response to Rep. Granatosky, Mr. Kadri explained the reasons why the Board of Education decided to subscribe to "Schazam" for video hosting.

RTM Education Committee Chairman Swindell reminded members that a committee meeting was held but had no quorum. Information was provided at that meeting to those present. He supports the authorization in order to provide video to the classrooms in the best manner possible. He noted that members may want to consider a caveat that future requests for changes to CIP funds would not be approved and that the usual budget process should be followed. He supports this change in authorization and asks other members to support it.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 18 - Rep. Ambrose, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Beckwith, Rep. Burns, Rep. Collins, Rep. Cooper, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Johnson, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Powers, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer and Rep. Swindell
Opposed: 11 - Moderator Power, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Morton, Rep. Parfitt, Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Scott, Rep. Semeraro, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Steinfeld and Rep. Warn

4. RECREATION

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Warn

No meeting, no report.

5. PUBLIC SAFETY

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Parfitt

No meeting, no report.

6. PUBLIC WORKS

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Collins

Chairman Collins read the minutes of the meeting held on August 11, 2010. (Minutes are attached.)

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Harrell and so voted unanimously.

2010-0156 Reauthorization of Funds - Catherine Kolnaski to Fitch High School for Water Infiltration

RESOLUTION REAUTHORIZING FUNDS ORIGINALLY APPROPRIATED FOR THE KOLNASKI SCHOOL FOR FITCH HIGH SCHOOL

WHEREAS, in FYE 2008 the Town Council and RTM approved a supplemental appropriation of \$500,000 for the Kolnaski school, and

WHEREAS, unexpended funds in the amount of \$141,509.28 remain in account 50107 5862 and are no longer required for Kolnaski school, and

WHEREAS, the Town wants to engage an architectural firm to investigate and provide proposed schematic repair options to address a water infiltration issue at Fitch High School, and

WHEREAS, the Town intends to work with the Town Attorney to seek reimbursement from parties responsible for the water infiltration as appropriate, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the remaining balance of \$141,509.28 designated for the Kolnaski school be reauthorized to engage an architectural firm to start the analysis and determine the appropriate construction method to address the water filtration issue.

Refer to RTM.

A motion was made by Rep. Collins, seconded by Rep. Parfitt, that this matter be Adopted.

Members discussed the number and location of leaks in the newly constructed section of Fitch High School; the causes for the leaks; repair costs; who is liable for the repair costs; the long-term effects if the mold is not properly removed.

Public Works Director Gary Schneider informed members of the ongoing commitment of the vendors, contractors and architect to remedy the leaks. He assured members that the problems will be fixed. He explained the need for the study in order to review all the information concerning the leaks and to advise the Town on the corrective action to correct the problem.

MOTION TO MOVE THE QUESTION was made by Rep. Harrell, seconded by Rep. Johnson. The vote on moving the question carried 15 in favor, 14 opposed (Opposed: Reps. Ambroise, Burns, Collins, Cooper, Kotowski, McCarthy, Parfitt, Pasqualini, Prochaska, Scott, Steinfeld, Swindell, Warn and Moderator Power.)

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 25 - Moderator Power, Rep. Ambroise, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Beckwith, Rep. Burns, Rep. Collins, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Johnson, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Morton, Rep. Parfitt, Rep. Powers, Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Scott, Rep. Semeraro, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Svencer and Rep. Swindell
Opposed: 3 - Rep. Cooper, Rep. Pasqualini Jr. and Rep. Warn
Abstain: 1 - Rep. Kotowski

7. RULES & PROCEDURES

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Scott

Chairman Scott read the minutes of the meeting held on August 18, 2010. (Minutes are attached.) Chairman Scott noted that the committee's recommendation for changing the date of the monthly meeting did not follow the results of the survey and that the committee voted separately for changing the date and location.

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Rep. Scott, seconded by Rep. Johnson and so voted unanimously.

2010-0027

Possible Changes to 2010 RTM Meeting Schedule

POSSIBLE CHANGES TO 2010 RTM MEETING SCHEDULE

Discussed

MOTION to change the location of the RTM meetings to the Groton Senior Center was made by Rep. Scott, seconded by Rep. Beckwith.

Members discussed the results of the survey that queried members in regard to changing the meeting location and meeting night.

In response to Rep. Smuts, Chairman Scott stated that it was the preference of the committee members to change the meeting night even though the results of the survey reflected that a majority wanted to continue meeting on the third Wednesday of the month.

Rep. Steinfeld expressed concern about the costs that may be incurred if the meeting date is changed.

POINT OF ORDER was raised by Rep. Streeter that discussion should be on changing the

location, not on the cost of changing the date of the meeting.

Other items discussed were: the lack of private space at the Town Hall Annex for party caucuses, the costs of a building monitor for the Senior Center, and the cost of Public Works staff to set-up and break down the meeting space at the Senior Center.

Town Clerk Moukawsher stated that there is no cost incurred for posting of meetings.

Rep. Scott clarified that no additional cost would be incurred for the 2 hours of set-up and break down by Public Works employees, since they would be assigned to this task during normal working hours. He mentioned that a one-time cost for microphones is estimated at \$2,500 if the RTM remains at the Town Hall Annex.

The vote on changing the location of the RTM meetings to the Groton Senior Center carried 23 in favor, 5 opposed, 1 abstention (Opposed: Reps. Cooper, Seminar, Smuts, Steinfeld and Warn, Abstaining: Rep. Kotowski.)

MOTION to move the RTM regular meeting night to the second Wednesday of each month starting on October 13, 2010 was made by Rep. Scott, seconded by Rep. Beckwith.

The motion carried 20 in favor, 7 opposed, 2 abstentions (Opposed: Reps. Baril, Gilly, Kotowski, Morton, Semeraro, Smuts and Warn, Abstaining: Reps. Ambrose and Burns.)

I. OTHER BUSINESS

2010-0183

Review of RTM Rule 8.1

REVIEW OF RTM RULE 8.1 PERSONAL INTEREST/CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This matter was Referred to the RTM Rules & Procedures Committee.

Rep. Kotowski requested a referral to review RTM Rule 8.1 Personal Interest/Conflict of Interest. She is requesting that in the first sentence, "may" be replaced with "shall" .

Members discussed the fact that meetings from October through December may be special meetings and other business would be eliminated. There was confusion that this fact was not disclosed during the discussion while the motion to change the meeting night was open for debate.

Discussion continued on whether a resolution was needed to change the meeting date effective October, 2010 in accordance with RTM Rule 9.3.

Town Clerk Moukawsher noted that she will review State Statutes to determine whether suspension of the rules to consider other business would be allowed at a special meeting. She will verify that giving 30 days notice of a change in meeting dates would allow the October through December 2010 meetings to be treated as regular meetings.

Moderator Power acknowledged that members are disturbed that the October through December meetings may be special meetings and that discussion of non-agenda items would be precluded. He confirmed that the Town Clerk will provide guidance on this matter.

2010-0182

Professional Development Account Expenditures

ACCOUNTING OF EXPENDITURES FROM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT (5210 - ALL DEPARTMENTS)

This matter was Referred to the Town Manager.

Rep. Kotowski requested itemized information concerning expenditures for the Professional Development Account (5210), so that an RTM committee can review the expenditures.

Discussion ensued on the validity of this request, since the RTM's power to approve expenditures is exercised during the budget process each year.

Moderator Power explained the RTM's responsibilities in regard to the budget and clarified that information may be requested, but would not be referred to a committee.

POINT OF ORDER was raised by Rep. Steinfeld concerning the discussion on this matter.

Rep. Swindell stated that a member may request specific information at any time.

The Town Manager explained that the professional development account is identified in the budget for each department. He stated that he can provide the expenditures for FYE 2010 and what has been spent to date for FYE 2011 but would not be able to do this on a monthly basis. He identified some of the items that are included in professional development. He stated that each department head can identify the exact items included in his or her proposed professional development account during budget deliberations.

POINT OF ORDER was raised by Rep. Warn concerning further discussion of the request for information.

2010-0181**FYE2012 Budget Discussion****FYE2012 BUDGET DISCUSSION****Discussed**

Rep. Kotowski requested that a standing referral be added to the RTM agenda under "Other Business" to enable budget discussion. She feels this will allow the RTM to establish goals and identify items to be reduced or eliminated in next year's budget prior to the budget deliberations. She would like to initiate communication with the Town Manager, Board of Education and Town Council before the Manager's proposed budget is finished. She suggests that a budget be developed that would not increase taxes for Groton taxpayers. She commented that taxes in Groton have increased more than any other Town in the region. She mentioned that many residents of her district are suffering as a result of the economic downturn. She observed that union employees of the Town voted twice and rejected concessions to the Town.

Moderator Power stated that a standing referral will appear on the agenda. This will allow discussion prior to budget deliberations in May. He mentioned that this was done last year.

J. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 9:25 p.m. was made by Moderator Power, seconded by Rep. Barnhart and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the RTM*

Sally A. Whitney, Assistant Town Clerk